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NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA • COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

New Steinbrenner Family CT imaging suite dedicated on June 26



Dr. Matt Winter (from left), Dean Glen Hoffsis, Art Gaines, UF President Bernie Machen, Chris Machen, Jessica Steinbrenner, Felix Lopez, Kevin Adler and Jim Scott visited the newly dedicated Steinbrenner Family CT Imaging Suite June 26 at the UF Veterinary Medical Center.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)

Horsewoman Jessica Steinbrenner, general manager of Kinsman Farm in Ocala and daughter of New York Yankees' owner George Steinbrenner, visited Gainesville June 26 to celebrate the dedication of a new CT imaging suite at the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center.

The Steinbrenner Family CT Imaging Suite was named in honor of the Steinbrenners in appreciation for an \$800,000 gift that made construction of the suite possible, providing UF with one of the most powerful tools available for veterinary diagnostics in the Southeastern United States.

Housed in the college's large animal hospital, the suite contains an 8-slice, multidetector row Toshiba Acquilion CT unit that allows for rapid imaging with exceptional contrast and spatial resolution.

"The Steinbrenner family feels that the University's veterinary faculty and

program are forward thinking and have the ability to help large animals on a grand scale, all while educating students in this field," Jessica Steinbrenner said.

UF VMC also has a 1.5 Tesla Toshiba Titan MR unit, which allows veterinarians to obtain highly detailed images in multiple planes of bone and soft tissue in all species. Foot, fetlock, suspensory ligaments, carpus, hock and heads are regions capable of being examined through MR in the horse. Multidetector row CT is often used for rapid evaluation of the skull and distal extremities. It is especially helpful in characterizing complex fractures using multiplanar reformatting techniques and 3-dimensional reconstructions. In small animals, both imaging tools are routinely applied to neurologic and orthopedic cases at the VMC, with additional studies performed for radiation planning and metastasis evaluations.

"Diagnostic imaging is an extremely important part of patient care," said Matthew Winter, D.V.M., assistant professor of radiology at UF's VMC. "Advanced imaging allows for more accurate diagnosis and better therapeutic management. The Steinbrenner's generous gift allows us to image rapidly and accurately, and all of our patients benefit from this technology."

Longtime pharmacy manager sets her sights on Tennessee

BY SARAH CAREY

Nearly 24 years to the day after Joan Thompson joined the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital — as it was known then — she's saying goodbye to join her husband, Dr. Jim Thompson, in Knoxville, where he will soon complete his first year as dean of the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Thompson was first hired at UF by the hospital's original pharmacy manager, James Cooper, who retired in 1987. She then became the pharmacy manager, and has held that job ever since.

"The first summer I worked here, it was so quiet that I read the novel, 'North and South,'" Thompson recalled. "That's how slow it was."

Back then, the pharmacy had no office, just two desks in the back of the room and an electric typewriter. The pharmacy was located in the block of rooms currently in use by the ophthalmology service.

"We didn't have a computer, and no Plumbs' or other veterinary drug formulary-type references. Since 1985, we've been through at least four software programs, including VSI, then Vetstar, now Cornerstone," Thompson said. "It was all on the job training."

Dr. Colin Burrows, chairman of the department of small animal clinical sciences and chief of staff of the small animal hospital, called Thompson "the rock on which our pharmacy has been built."

"Joan ran the pharmacy with quiet and rigid efficiency and gained the respect of all the clinicians," Burrows said.

Dr. Michael Schaer, associate chief of staff for the small animal hospital, added that he was especially grateful for Thompson's recent efforts to procure anti-venom for the treatment of dogs with snakebite.

As pharmacy manager, Thompson spent much of her time performing tasks other than dispensing medications. Her biggest job has been monitoring and managing the use of controlled substances, ensuring that everything from dispensations of such drugs to detailed record keeping was accurate and in compliance with state and federal regulations.

"The challenges are so many that it's hard to see what your accomplishments have been because you're always swimming upstream," Thompson said, adding that the pharmacy service has been strong over the years, with low turnover and a very efficient staff.

Today that staff includes pharmacist Kathy Rode, who has been at the UF CVM for more than 20 years; Adam Zipper, a certified pharmacy technician; Melanie Wilcox, also a pharmacy technician; and Raymond Moore, who is responsible for the inventory, including all stocking and ordering and has also been a pharmacy staff member for more than 20 years. In August 2008, Thompson also hired a part-time pharmacist, Sandy Still, who will become the new pharmacy manager after Thompson's departure.

"There was a time when you could run the pharmacy with one pharmacist, one technician and one clerk and keep up," Thompson said. "That would be just impossible now. We have animals on multiple infusions, animals receiving postoperative pain management after surgery. In addition to ear cleaning products, heartworm prevention and flea control, pet care may now include multi-drug therapies for heart disease, renal disease and cancer, utilizing human and veterinary pharmaceuticals, natural products and nutriceuticals."

Thompson has been a fellow in the Society of Veterinary Hospital Pharmacists, an international organization of veterinary pharmacists, since 1989, serving as secretary and as president-elect.

"It's an organization comprised of pharmacists working in similar environments and dealing with similar challenges," Thompson said.

Her professional plans in Knoxville are currently undetermined, but Thompson said she'll be happy to finally take up residence again with her husband. Still, leaving Gainesville and Florida will be difficult in many ways, she said.

"I've been here since 1975," Thompson said. "This is as much of a hometown as I've ever had. Our children will continue to reside in Florida...for now."



Joan Thompson served as the CVM's pharmacy manager for 24 years.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)

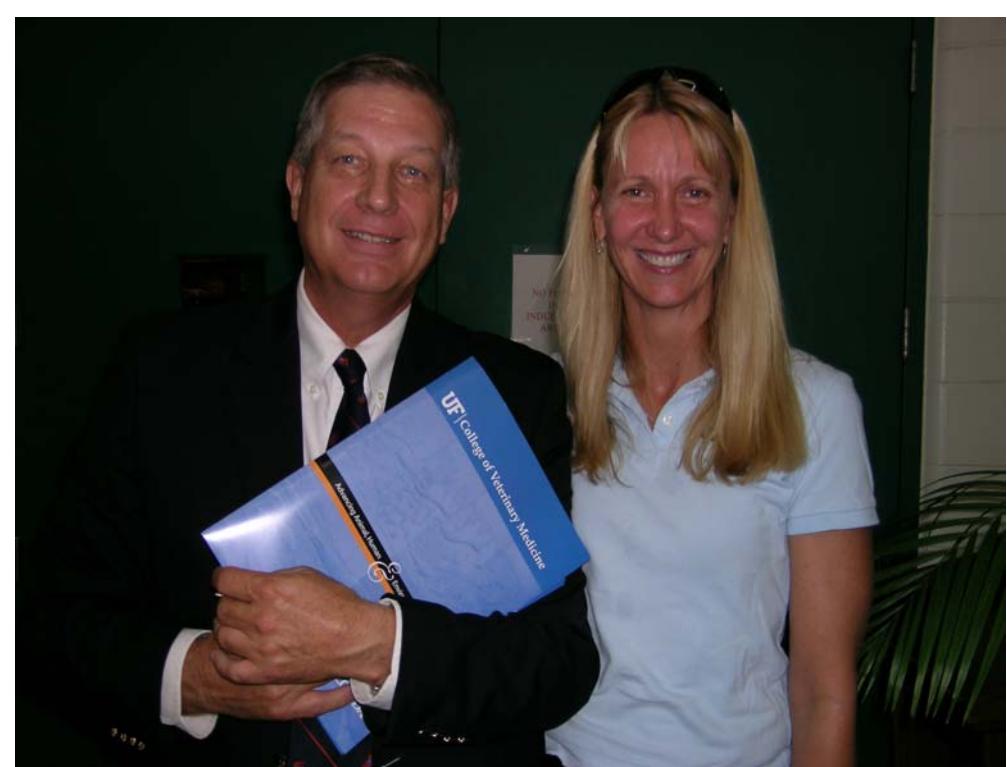


From left to right are Sandy Still, Melanie Wilcox, Kathy Rode, Adam Zipper, Joan Thompson and Raymond Moore, pictured during Thompson's last week at the UF CVM.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Dean Glen Hoffsis and Jessica Steinbrenner outside the newly dedicated Steinbrenner Family C.T. Imaging Suite.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Kinsman Farms manager Jim Scott and Dr. Ali Morton, a UF CVM large animal surgeon, visit after the dedication ceremony.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)

For UF reptile expert, herp species have been lifelong passion

Editor's note: Special thanks to the editor of Reptile magazine for allowing us to reprint these excerpts from Dr. Elliott Jacobson's responses to their questions. Jacobson is a professor of wildlife and zoological medicine in the college's department of small animal clinical sciences. His interview will appear in an upcoming issue of Reptile Magazine.

VP: How did you first become interested in herps?

EJ: I was a city kid, growing up in Brooklyn, NY, from the late 1940s through the 1960s. My first love was actually insects. I probably started collecting insects as soon as I could walk. As I grew up I thought I would be an entomologist. During the warmer times of the year, I would spend hours upon hours collecting insects in backyards and vacant lots in my neighborhood. It was amazing what I could find.

My only opportunity to see reptiles was when my father took me to the Staten Island Zoo, Bronx Zoo, American Museum of Natural History, and to the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. When I was a child, my mother would take me to the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus when it had its annual show in NYC. There I discovered American anoles and red-eared sliders that were sold in small boxes displayed on a large frame as you walked into the mezzanine area of Madison Square Garden. I was attracted to reptiles instantly, but had no opportunity in my neighborhood to collect any.

When I became older, and I was allowed to travel on my own elsewhere in Brooklyn, I found populations of Dekay snakes and eastern garter snakes still existing at that time. Each summer my parents would take my younger sister and me on week-long vacations somewhere in the tri-state area, and it was then I began to spend almost all my time collecting amphibians, and reptiles. I caught my first snake, a northern water snake, at Enfield State Park, Ithaca, NY in 1953. That moment is etched in my mind and was captured by my father on film. As I grew older, herps started displacing my interest in insects and by my early teens I was totally hooked on herps.

VP: Did you go to school to study them specifically?

EJ: My love for herps and my decision to go to school and study them evolved together over time. I went to undergraduate school at Brooklyn College, a campus of the City University of New York. As a resident of Brooklyn, I was eligible for admission and because it was free, that is where I went. I had no friends who kept herps as pets, so that was a hobby I pursued on my own. Although I was a science major, with most of my elective courses in biology, unfortunately there were no herp-oriented faculty members at BC at that time. But my love for herps kept growing — I had a collection of herps that originated from various pet stores in NYC — and I finally decided I wanted to go on to graduate school where I could more specifically work with them. In 1965 I traveled throughout the western United States and immediately fell in love with our Southwestern deserts. This influenced my decision to go to New Mexico State University for my Master of Science degree in 1967. It was at NMSU that I had the best experience in all of my college years. My major advisor, Dr. Walter Whitford, took a group of us to the American Museum of Natural History's Southwestern Field Station for Research in the Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona. Because of this I have been going back just about every summer since 1967. From NMSU, I went to the University of Missouri to continue my graduate studies, working on mudpuppies for my Ph.D. research. Deaths of many of my research animals made me realize how little was known about diseases of these animals, which motivated me to pursue a career in veterinary medicine where I could use my background and interest in herps to better understand the medical and disease problems of these animals. I graduated in 1975 with my D.V.M. degree and my Ph.D. degree in zoology. From 1975-1977, I worked as a wildlife veterinarian for the state of Maryland. In 1977, I arrived at the new College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida as a resident in Laboratory Animal and Wildlife Medicine. Following this training program, I became a faculty member at UF, and 32 years later, I am still at the same institution. For herps, UF has been a great place to be a faculty member.

VP: Take me through a timeline of your progression in the reptile industry.

EJ: Around 1950, my first pet reptiles were red-eared sliders, American anoles from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus and eastern newts from local pet stores. A few years later, I caught my first snake, a northern water snake. From the 1950s to the late 1960s, I bought various snakes, lizards, turtles, American alligator, and brown caiman from various pet stores in NYC and then for two years I was able to catch a wide variety of herps throughout the Southwest United States. From the 1970s on, I have purchased many herps through various reptile dealers and expos, and more recently, through kingsnake.com.

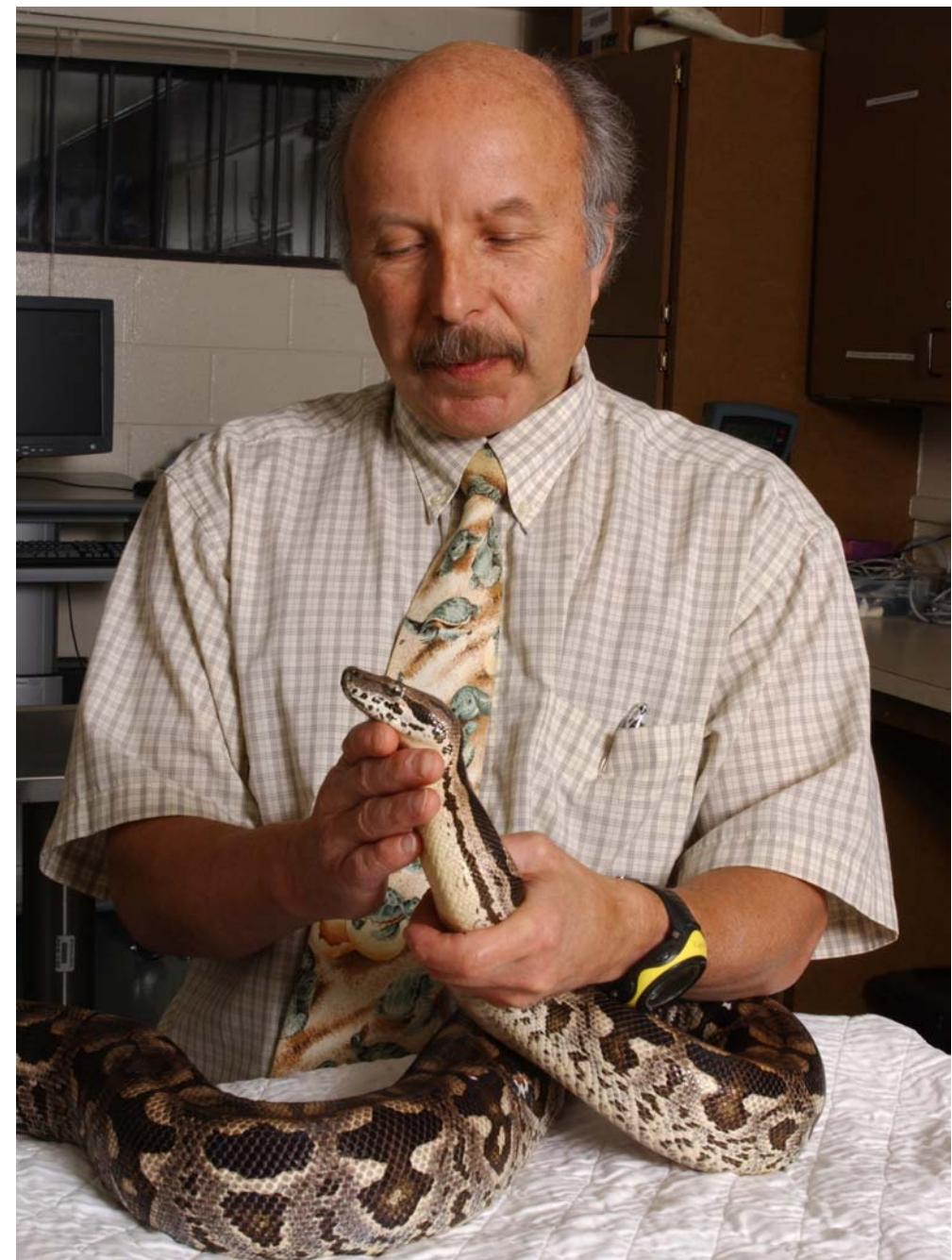
VP: What is the most rewarding part of what you do?

EJ: Teaching students and training residents in our zoological medicine training-program, coupled with research projects that ultimately improve the health of captive and wild reptiles is extremely rewarding. Many of our former residents are now zoo veterinarians and university clinicians around the country.

I have also served as the major advisor to a number of graduate students, several who now are academicians at UF and elsewhere. The torch has been passed on to others in our field. There are more veterinarians knowledgeable in reptile medicine today than ever before, and I feel that I have been able contribute to this growth in knowledge.

VP: What projects are you currently working on?

EJ: First, there are my research projects. My laboratory at UF focuses on infectious diseases of reptiles and I have a graduate student working on IBD (inflammatory bowel disease) of boid snakes. This is one disease problem of snakes that needs to be solved, and I would like to see that happen before I retire in less than three years. Then there is my snake breeding project. Since retirement is approaching far too quickly, two years ago I started purchasing snakes that I would like to breed after I finish my academic career. These include Baja ratsnakes, Arizona



Dr. Elliott Jacobson handles a Madagascan ground boa in the zoological medicine ward.

(File photo)

green ratsnakes, Trans-Pecos ratsnakes, Texas indigos, mussuranas, and bush vipers. Several have reproduced for the first time last year.

With about 90 snakes, my evenings are quite busy trying to keep up with job responsibilities and animal responsibilities at the same time. I have learned so much by keeping and breeding these animals, things that I would never have learned otherwise.

VP: What has been your biggest accomplishment to date?

EJ: As mentioned above, my greatest accomplishments have been my academic teaching and research accomplishments. I have had the great fortune to work at a major university where I have been able to help build a zoological medicine service and training program, and a laboratory that studies infectious diseases of reptiles.

I and my colleagues have identified a wide variety of infectious diseases of reptiles, and my laboratory now offers a variety of tests to determine exposure to or infection with these pathogens. I feel I have done a lot for a group of animals I have kept and worked with almost my entire life.

VP: What are some tips you would give for someone interested in following your footsteps in a herp career?

EJ: First, follow your heart. Second, put your full energy into whatever you want to do. And third, realize when there is an opportunity that you need to respond to. Some people fail to respond to an opportunity because there is always a certain amount of risk when you are deciding to do something new. Still, use some common sense when making such a decision.

VP: Any unusual, funny or special stories to share?

EJ: The best are almost always animal escapes. My mother had just purchased a new stove that she was so proud of since she had to save for years to purchase it. I was cleaning out a corn snake's cage and for some reason brought the snake into the kitchen to get something. Somehow the snake got into a heat-venting hole on the side of the stove and I basically had to dismantle the entire stove to extricate the snake. My mother came home just as the last piece of the stove was removed. Her new stove was in a pile. Needless to say, this did not go over very well. But still, she never forced me to give away my collection.

VP: Anything else you'd like to share?

EJ: Two things. First my luck for having parents who never prevented me from bringing home all the insects and animals I had as a child. While they never had any experience with these animals, they saw some value in my attraction to them. Second, there is my wife Stephanie. We met because of a common interest in animals and she has also seen value in all the animals I have brought home. While she sees my post-retirement breeding program as just an excuse for having more herps, she has allowed me to swamp our home (and our guest house) with these animals. Our bedroom has often been a quarantine room for many of my snakes.

Around the college....

Schaer named to new administrative post



Dr. Michael Schaer

Michael Schaer, D.V.M., a professor of small animal medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, will soon assume a new administrative role as special assistant to the dean.

Schaer has been a member of UF's veterinary college faculty since 1979. He served as head of the small animal hospital between 1980 and 1998 and then as associate chief of staff from 1998 to the present. Schaer also served as chief of the small animal medicine service from 1979 to 2005.

In his new post, Schaer, a board-certified specialist in veterinary emergency and critical care, will work closely with the college's Office for Students and Instruction by helping to advise and orient veterinary students. He will also work with the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs and will remain involved in programs for residents and interns.

"Dr. Schaer has a distinguished record as a faculty member and clinician," said the college's dean, Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M. "He will bring his extensive experience and knowledge to the administration, which will yield great benefits, but at the same time he will be able to continue the important teaching and clinical roles that have always been his passion."

Schaer's new role will become effective later this summer.

New vaccine should help prevent canine influenza



Dr. Cynda Crawford

BY SARAH CAREY

The UF discovery that equine influenza virus had jumped species into racing greyhounds, causing several dogs to die at the track in 2004, was a major scientific finding worthy of international news. Within a year, however, the new pathogen — now known as canine influenza virus — exploded into the pet dog population, causing mass hysteria at kennels and shelters across the country, and among veterinarians who had no idea how to protect pets against the deadly respiratory illness.

Five years later, veterinarians and the pet owning public will soon have an important tool for fighting canine flu in the form of a vaccine approved conditionally in June by the USDA and being marketed by Intervet/Schering Plough Animal Health Corporation. During the conditional license period, Intervet/Schering Plough will continue to submit data in support of the product's performance while governmental regulators decide whether to issue a regular license.

"The vaccine has actually been sent by Intervet/Shering Plough to its distributors, so it is now available for vets to order for their clients," said Dr. Cynda Crawford, the Maddie's Fund clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine at UF and a co-discoverer of the canine influenza virus. "The vaccine is intended as an aid in the control of disease associated with CIV infection."

Crawford served as a consultant in the vaccine's development, along with Dr. Ed Dubovi, a professor of virology at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Although the vaccine may not prevent infection, efficacy trials have shown that vaccination significantly reduces the severity of damage to the lungs," Crawford said. "In addition, the vaccine reduces the amount of virus shed and shortens the shedding interval. This means that vaccinated dogs that become infected have less illness and are not as contagious to other dogs."

Since canine influenza was first identified, the virus has continued to spread and has now been detected in dogs in 30 states and in the District of Columbia, Crawford said.

Most dogs have no immunity to the virus, which is highly contagious and can quickly spread through communal groups of animals, such as shelters, adoption groups, pet stores, boarding and training facilities and veterinary clinics.

"This vaccine represents the culmination of six years of investigations led by UF which underpinned the development of a vaccine to better protect the health and welfare of dogs, particularly those housed in groups," Crawford said.

Here's the point



Dr. Huisheng Xie, right, a veterinary acupuncturist at the UF Veterinary Medical Center, finds a point on the head of this cat, Nickolas, into which a needle will soon be inserted to calm him and treat his behavioral problem. Holding Nickolas at left is Rachel Brown, a junior veterinary student. Nickolas is owned by Dr. Carol Ash, CVM's volunteer advocate coordinator and longtime college supporter.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)